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ABSTRACT

An experimental project--Watch A Book--is being conducted to determine if public television (PTV) programs can be used in a video cassette format by individual viewers in a public library setting. The Public Television Library (PTL), the national center for the exchange of public television programs between PTV stations, has provided libraries in Bloomington, Indiana; Jackson, Mississippi; and Norfolk, Virginia with 150 half-hour units of PTV programing on video cassettes. Video cassette machines have been installed in the libraries, and records are being kept of all phases of the operation. Data collected during the first quarter reveal the following trends: 1) Watch A Book patrons tend to be middle class users already familiar with the library; 2) user response is favorable and equipment use is from 75% to 90% of capacity; 3) the largest group of users are from 17 to 30 years of age, followed by those in the 7-12 age bracket; and 4) cooperation between PTV stations and participating libraries is high. Thus, early indications are that a new avenue for public service can be established by making PTV programs available in public libraries. (LB)

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"HAVE YOU WATCHED A BOOK TODAY?"

An Experimental Project
of
The Public Television Library

First Quarter Report

October 1, 1973

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"Have You Watched A Book Today"

An Experimental Study of The Public Television Library

INTRODUCTION:

The Public Televison Library (PTL) is a department of the Public Broadcasting Service (PBS). Established in 1965 as an activity of the National Association of Educational Broadcasters under grants from the National Home Library Foundation and the W.K. Kellogg Foundation, the Library was known as the Educational Television Stations Program Service (ETS/PS). In 1971, PBS assumed responsibility for the Library and the name was changed to the Public Television Library. The Library is operated by the Indiana University Foundation for PBS, and utilizes the services provided by the radio-tv and audio-visual facilities of Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana.

The Public Television Library is operated for and in behalf of the public television stations in the United States, directly responsible and responsive to the stations' changing programming needs and conditions. The Library's policies and procedures are established by the Board of Governors of PBS. The Library serves as the national center for the delayed distribution of PTV programs to a variety of users.

The objectives of the Public Television Library are to provide:

1. A national centralized storage and retrieval system for PTV programming distinct from the real time program offerings of the PBS interconnected network.

2. A national agency offering maximum opportunity for varied sources to contribute nationally useful PTV programming and, conversely, the opportunity for PTV stations and educational agencies to obtain quality PTV programming which is useful at the local level.

The television programs in the Library are selected to fill the programming gap between instructional (school and college) courses and PBS interconnected offerings.

PTL serves as the national centralized source for the delayed distribution of all PTV program materials of more-than-local interest. With the primary distribution of many PTV programs via the PBS interconnected network, PTL concen-

trates on a "tape by mail" distribution of PTV programming to afford repeated and independent scheduling and use of PTV programming to meet various user-specified needs.

The Public Television Library (PTL), in an effort to ascertain the avenues available for the expansion of the audience for PTV programming produced by the nation's 147 non-commercial television station licensees, has commenced a systematic study of the applicability of television programs produced by public television stations as a potential educational-enrichment resource for "other than broadcast" utilization.

The study seeks to determine if some of the public television programs, as represented by those presently distributed by PTL, can be used in a video cassette format as a resource for personal instruction, education, enlightenment, and enrichment for "on-request" viewer utilization in a "one to one" setting in a public library.

BACKGROUND:

The Public Television Library, as the national center for the exchange of public television programs between PTV stations, has historically been responsive to the programming needs of those stations. The 1600 program units distributed by PTL cover a wide range of subject areas and may thus be potentially suitable as enrichment and supplementary materials for public library utilization. The experimental design developed by PTL will assist in ascertaining the extent to which PTL distributed programs may augment traditional materials found in a public library setting and thus expand the audience for all PTV program materials.

Since PTL is an organization created by and for the public television stations, the study has actively involved two non-commerical PTV stations, one state ETV network and a state Telecommunications Council. Initially participating in the experiment are:

WTIU-TV, Bloomington, Indiana (Licensed to Indiana University) and The Monroe County Public Library, Bloomington, Indiana.

Mississippi Authority for Educational Television, Jackson, Mississippi and the Jackson Metropolitan Library.

WHRO-TV, Norfolk, Virginia (Licensed to Hampton Roads ETV Assn), The Norfolk City Library, and The Virginia Public

Telecommunications Council.

Participants in the experiment were selected on the basis of the following criteria:

A. Libraries: 1) size of present holdings, 2) type of library services offered, 3) nature of constituency, 4) population served, 5) and core city location.

B. Public Television Stations: 1) type of licensee, 2) size of coverage area, 3) geographic location.

"HAVE YOU WATCHED A BOOK TODAY?"

General Project Objectives:

PTL:

To conduct jointly an experimental study in cooperation with selected public libraries and non-commercial television broadcast organizations to determine the suitability of public television programs as a potential public library resource.

To ascertain the applicability of PTL programs for individual, one-to-one, on request, utilization in a public library environment.

To study the extent of the involvement possible by public television stations in expanding the audience for locally produced programs in concert with those provided by PTL.

And to examine the distribution potential of PTV programming in non-broadcast tape formats to new users in the audio visual field.

Public Libraries:

To determine the suitability and applicability of the video cassette as an additional public library resource.

To ascertain the extent of public library staff involvement in the operation and logistical aspects of providing video cassette capacity as a library resource.

To assist in determining the best environment within the public library for one-to-one, on request, utilization.

To develop statistics on technical reliability of video cassette equipment and tape under stress - high utilization situations.

The Public Television Licensees:

To ascertain the additional community service possibilities inherent in local distribution of public television programs in video cassette formats.

To study the cross-promotional avenues available for expanding the public awareness of and accessability to public television station produced materials.

To determine any additional paths available to the public television stations which they may follow in expanding their service to their constituency.

Specific Experimental Project Objectives:

The study specifically seeks to answer the following questions:

A. What factors influence the use of PTV programs in a video cassette format in a public library setting? Specifically:

   1. Color vs monochrome production?
   2. Length of a given program?
   3. Configuration of the programs available? (Series form contrasted with single, self-contained programs)

B. What type of user is most attracted to the video cassette as a learning or enrichment tool?

C. What is the frequency of use by each individual? Is repeat use frequency high or is utilization primarily motivated by curiosity?

D. What subject areas are most often requested?

E. What adjustments might PTL need to contemplate in its program acquisition policy in order to expand the audience for PTV programs through public libraries and other educational-institutional users.

F. What areas of cooperation exist for the cross promotion between the library and the local PTV station as a result of the video cassette capability of a public library? (e.g., cross promotion of a PTV program broadcast over a public television station with subsequent availability at the public libraries on video cassette...local CATV public access broadcasts made available at the local library for delayed and/or additional viewing... special joint promotional mailings or campaigns)

G. What trends in demographic utilization exist? (See Appendix A).

1. Do "users" correlate with general library service area populations?

2. Does the project appeal to certain definable "types?"

3. Does the availability of cassette program material assist in introducing members of minority groups to library services?

4. Are there discernible differences or similarities between participating libraries in terms of utilization, both in program and user "type?"

H. Is the equipment reliable enough to make "one-to-one" utilization practicable?

1. What is the incidence of breakdown?

2. Can mechanical problems be classified by type - are they similar?

3. Are the mechanical problems serious or can they be corrected by library staff?

I. Does the availability of cassette material and its utilization influence other print resource material use?

J. Does the number of cassette machines available for public use influence utilization?

Procedures:

PTL has provided the participating libraries with 150 half-hour units of PTL programming in series and/or single

program formats on 3/4-inch video cassettes. (See Appendix B)

A. PTL has also provided a catalogue of programs available on 3/4-inch video cassette to the libraries for public use in identification and selection of materials. In addition, PTL designed and implemented certain promotional aides and descriptive brochures for distribution via selective mailings to organizations and individuals by the participating libraries and cooperating public television stations, as they deemed appropriate.

B. The program materials, provided the participating libraries in video cassette form, have been selected by library acquisition and utilization experts as representative of general interest areas. In addition, the participating public television stations and the Mississippi Authority for Educational Television have added a number of additional programs, produced locally, to their cooperating library.

The "Watch A Book" libraries are assisting PTL in the keeping of records on cassette utilization and distributing user questionnaires as requested by PTL. In addition, they have provided space for the video cassette machines in a conspicuous area of the library, and have provided the personnel required to assure the smooth, day-to-day operation and utilization of the cassette machines and programming.

In addition, participating public television stations are assisting the libraries in promoting the cassette programming available and certain cross promotional program exchanges, on-air promotional announcements, and other areas of cooperation are being explored to assure the greatest possible public awareness of this library resource and the PTV station's active role in the experimental program.

This experimental project is targeted to conclude on June 30, 1974, and the utilization data and cooperative efforts will be examined, evaluated and a final report with recommendations will be issued by PTL.

Participants:

The cooperating agencies are listed below. These agencies, including public television stations, public libraries and a state telecommunications council, have been most enthusiastic participants in the project.

Bloomington, Indiana:

The Monroe County Public Library, Robert Trinkle, Director -- Located in Bloomington, Indiana, the Monroe County Library serves some 85,000 area residents. The first library in the nation to become equipped with a Randtriever for automatic, mechanical book storage and retrieval, the library is housed in a new $2.5 million building and provides for its patrons a wide variety of services. Among these are special film showings, meeting rooms, 150 seat stage-auditorium, and ultra-modern surroundings. Housing 125,000 volumes, the library servies approximately 20,000 people a month, and has a book check-out average of 40,000 per month. Since it must, in a sense, compete with the library services of the 8th largest university in the United States, Indiana University, also located in Bloomington, it is extremely sensitive to the best methods of serving its home community and county.

Monroe County, of which Bloomington is the county seat, has a rural orientation, though the city of Bloomington (population: 42,890) mitigates this to some degree. The residents are primarily white and are divided between the relatively under-educated, blue collar workers, and those who have a professional or academic orientation.

Thus the library serves to meet the needs of two very disparate white Anglo-Saxon groups by its programs, services, and acquisition policies.

Data Summary to October 1, 1973:

The first of the three libraries to commence the "Watch A Book" project, May 4, 1973, the Monroe County Library, utilizing one 3/4-inch video cassette machine, has already received 489 viewer utilization questionnaires, representing 244 hours of actual patron viewing. (It may be postulated that a large percentage of return users do not wish to fill out additional questionnaires. However, tape pass data, thus more comprehensive individual program utilization statistics, will be available in the six-month report.)

Of the total number of questionnaires returned, the following information was extracted:

A. The preponderance of viewing was done by males on a two-to-one basis.

B. The viewers, as might be expected since Monroe County has only a 4.7% minority population, were 97% Caucasion.

C. Most of the viewers had either some high school or some college education and were, in the main, in the $5,000 - $15,000 economic bracket with the greater percentage in the $5,000 - $10,000 range.

D. Although over 75% of the respondents had a library card, most were only occasional patrons and had learned of the project either through a friend or by visiting the library.

E. Of special note, 73% of the respondents indicated enough interest in the subject viewed to search out other print materials relevant to the program content.

F. Over 93% of the respondents indicated that the availability of 3/4-inch video cassette materials would prompt a return visit and re-viewing. This high percentage indicates a wide acceptance, on the part of Monroe County utilizers, of the "Watch A Book" concept. This is reinforced by the fact that 476 of the total 489 respondents indicated an interest in seeing the project continued.

WTIU, Donley F. Feddersen, General Manager -- A university licensee, WTIU has been broadcasting to the greater Bloomington area for over four years. With a full time staff of 20 and a part time roster of 13, WTIU broadcasts six days a week. A production agency for a number of programs distributed nationally, WTIU also devotes a considerable amount of time to programs of local interest including live coverage of the Bloomington City Council meetings.

In addition, the station operates an extensive closed-circuit instructional service for the University, and many of the professional staff carry faculty rank and teaching responsibilities. Operating at a power of 200,000 watts, the station provides a public television service for over 450,000 residents in all or part of 14 southern Indiana counties.

During the course of the project, to date, WTIU has contributed over 20 local productions to the Monroe County Library "Watch A Book" collection. In addition, the station has engaged in an intense cross promotional campaign, especially in the promotion of locally produced programs. Among those programs added have been: "Big Red Football," "Afro-American Dance," and "The Tuba and All That Jazz."

Norfolk, Virginia:

Norfolk City Library, Arthur Kirkby, Director -- Serving the city of Norfolk, the largest metropolitan area in Virginia with 307,951 residents within the city limits, the library reaches over 2,000 area residents a day, with not only books and

materials check-out, but special facilities for meetings and community activities, audio visual services, and a special research capacity.

Located in the heart of downtown Norfolk, the Library figures prominently in Norfolk's massive core city renewal activities and is housed in a modern 10 year old building containing 300,000 volumes. The patrons of the library are a varied group with approximately one-third of the library users members of an ethnic minority. Norfolk is also a major seaport and military base and thus must serve a large number of service personnel based in and around the city. This portends a higher than average transient population and the attendant need for the acquisition of more specialized materials.

Data Summary to October 1, 1973:

Commencing on August 1, 1973, with three video cassette machines available, the Kirn Memorial Public Library (Norfolk) served an estimated 620 patrons, with 487 questionnaires returned.

A. Again, as in the Monroe County Library, the majority of users, by a three-to-one ratio, were males. However, more members of minority groups utilized the "Watch A Book" capacity at the library than did those who listed themselves as Caucasions.

B. The majority of users were in the 17-30 year old classification; however, the 7-12 year old group was much more in evidence than in the Monroe County experience.

C. Again, most of the users had either some college or some high school education.

D. Over 33% of those returning questionnaires at the Kirn Memorial Library were in the under $5,000 gross family income classification with $5,000 - $10,000 accounting for another 30%.

E. Almost 75% of the "Watch A Book" questionnaires of the total responding indicated that the user had a library card; 40% indicated that they were occasional users.

F. As at the Monroe County Library, the predominate mode of information transmission on the project was through word of mouth and library visitation.

G. 85% of the respondees indicated that viewing materials had piqued their interest in searching out print materials on the same or related subjects.

H. Interestingly, only about 65% of the users indicated that they planned to view additional materials on cassette. However, this may be due to the limited number of "minority" interest programs available during the initial weeks of the project in Norfolk.

I. Of note is the fact that almost 50% of the users of the cassette equipment, did not need assistance in setting up for operation and viewing. At the Monroe County Library, better than 70% needed help of some kind in this area.

WHRO-TV, Randolph Brent, General Manager -- With almost ten years of broadcast service experience to the greater Norfolk metropolitan area, WHRO-TV has established itself as a community-oriented station. Broadcasting seven days per week, WHRO-TV has achieved renown throughout the nation for its instructional program development, and many of the series produced by the station are in national distribution. In addition, the full time staff of 34 devotes a substantial amount of their production activities to the production of programs for local and state audiences. This is clearly in keeping with the role of a community telecommunications center which WHRO-TV has chosen to assume. Future plans call for the enlargement of the WHRO-TV broadcast studio complex to provide for CATV origination, closed circuit transmission, and specialized community telecommunications activities.

Because of their sizable inventory of locally produced programs, WHRO-TV has added over 100 additional titles to the PTL-provided 150 half hour program units. Many of these, added to the Kirn Memorial Library collection, were produced for members of minority groups. Among those programs added by WHRO-TV to the Kirn collection are: "The Gig," "African Cultural Carry Over" and several children's programs.

The State of Virginia Public Telecommunications Council, George Hall, Director -- Formed in the spring of 1972 by legislative action, the Council has been charged by the Commonwealth to assure the greatest possible development of communications resources in the state. In addition to directing and supervising the growth of public broadcasting and CATV, the Council is also involved in the development of the video cassette as a teaching and enrichment tool for public school use in isolated areas of the Commonwealth. The PTL-Public Library

project thus provides the state with an ideal parallel activity.

The Council is also charged with the responsibility for experimenting and the funding of various communications-oriented projects, and the follow-up required to assure the successful introduction of new services for the citizens of Virginia.

Through a $25,000 grant from the Council, PTL was able to add WHRO-TV and the Kirn Memorial Public Library in Norfolk to the "Have You Watched A Book Today?" experiment.

Jackson, Mississippi:

The Jackson Metropolitan Library, Harold J. Ard, Director -- The Jackson Metropolitan Library is the core of a library system with 26 branches. The central city library houses some 250,000 volumes and over 350,000 Jacksonians use one or more of the many services of the library including traditional book check-out. The modern facility is staffed by 55 full time employees and is in the heart of Jackson.

Because the population of Jackson, 153,968 people within the city limits, is approximately 35% Black, and the city is the home of The Southern Baptist religious organization, the library has attempted to reflect in its acquisition policies and services, the tastes and needs of its constituents. This is shown by the library's special section on Black History and Studies; In addition, the activities of the library are influenced by its location in Jackson, the Mississippi State Capitol, a city noted for its traditional southern atmosphere and sense of the historical past.

Data Summary to October 1, 1973:

The Jackson Metropolitan Library began offering the "Watch A Book" service to patrons on July 9, 1973. Two machines and two sets of tapes (as compared to the Norfolk Library's three machines and two sets of tapes and Monroe County Library's one machine and one set of tapes) are available for patron utilization. To date, over 620 people have utilized the equipment and 441 questionnaires have been completed and turned in. Again, the variance between number of users and returned questionnaires is due to the number of repeat patrons who do not wish to fill out another questionnaire.

A. Consistent with the first quarter findings for the other participating libraries, males dominated the

utilization statistics by a wide margin, 62% to 38%. However, in contrast to Norfolk, the majority of the use of cassette materials by members of an ethnic minority was extremely small, 9%.

B. As in the other libraries, the largest number of viewers were in the 22-30 age range, but the Jackson Library, as with the Kirn Memorial in Norfolk, showed a significant number of viewers in the 7-12 age bracket.

C. Significantly 32% of the users had either a high school or college degree and again the $5,000 - $15,000 income brackets accounted for 60% of the "Watch A Book" patrons. Unlike Norfolk and Monroe County however, the largest single catagory of users was in the $10,000 - $15,000 income range with the $5,000 - $10,000 next in terms of user numbers.

D. Unlike the data from the Monroe County Public Library and the Kirn Memorial, almost half of the respondents indicated that they did not have a library card, though the response sheets indicate that a high percentage (64%) utilize the library for a variety of non-book check out purposes.

E. Over two thirds of the "Watch A Book" patrons learned of the project through library visitation and over 90% said that the program watched prompted them to secure print material on the subject. A similar high percentage (93%) said that they planned to view other cassetted programs.

F. The statistics on patron operation of the equipment is especially interesting. Of those responding, almost 66% indicated that they did not need assistance in operating the equipment.

G. Less than 1% of those responding indicated that they did not find the "Watch A Book" resource one which they would like to see continued.

The Mississippi Educational Television Authority (WMAA-TV), Mr. William R. Smith, Jr., Executive Director -- Located in Jackson and housed in the new State Department of Development complex, the Mississippi Authority for Educational Television can well be considered one of the country's leading state telecommunications agencies. Serving the entire state of Mississippi with public television, adult and continuing education, and in-school instructional broadcasting, the Authority

has placed a major emphasis on bringing to its constituents a large amount of locally produced cultural, instructional and enrichment materials to assist the less fortunate state resident to help himself improve his life through television education.

The Authority has been most cooperative and has, in addition to cross promotional activities, added 18 local productions to the "Watch A Book" collection at the Jackson Metropolitan Library. In addition, the ETV Authority has secured programs from other sources for inclusion in the project.

The rapport established between the participants in Jackson, as in Monroe County and Norfolk, has been extremely close.

Conclusion:

This first report represents only a modest attempt at data evaluation and has been purposefully kept to generalizations. But several trends seem clearly discernible:

A. The average "Watch A Book" patron is in the middle income bracket and is not only familiar with the library but a utilizer of its services.

B. Patron response to the project has been extremely enthusiastic and utilization in all three libraries (with their variety of machine configurations and available sets of tapes) has been between 75-90% capacity.

C. The majority of users seem to range in age from 17-30, but a significant percentage are in the 7-12 age group. Admittedly this could be primarily due to the "curiosity" factor and may dimish during the course of the experiment.

D. Cooperation between the PTV stations and the participating libraries has been good and the addition of locally produced programs geared to local interests seem to offer additional incentives for patron utilization.

PTL feels that the above generalizations auger well for the future, and that a new avenue for service to the public through the expansion of the audience for PTV station produced programming, via both PTL and the local stations, can be accomplished in public library settings.